THE EDICT AND DECREE

of *Phillip* King of *Spaine*:

PVBLISHED AND proc'aimed by the ſaid King, touching the exchaungings and leuyings *of monyes, & him made & paſſed with Marchants.*

VVith a briefe diſcourſe of the habilities and affaires of the ſaid King.

Firſt tranſlated out of Spaniſh, and now out of French into Engliſh by W. P.



London printed by Iohn Wolfe.
1597.

THE EDICT

and decree of *Phillip* King of Spain,

published and proclaimed by the said King, touching *the exchaungings and lewyings of monyes, by him made & passed with Marchants.*

With

A briefe discourse of the habilities and affayres of the said King.

By the King.

HAuing seene and well considered, that notwithstanding the great reuenewes and profites of our Territories and dominions, as well domesticall as forrayne, together with the most gracious aides and succours by his Holinesse, granted and performed in our behalfes, thereby to supply the wants and necessarie charges of our walles, as well against England, as to defende and maintaine the Catholike religion: together with the continuall seruices, that our said countries and subiectes haue done and dayly doo, as tokens of their loyall and faithfull mindes

towardes vs. Likewiſe the great quantities of gold & ſiluer which our Indies haue yeelded, together with the increaſe of our treaſure by the onely meanes and induſtrie of ſuch as from time to time haue had the managing of the ſame, wee find neuertheleſſe all our treaſures, and aboundance of riches wholly to be conſumed and waſted, and our royall patrimonie in a manner decaied, by means of the great and exceſsiue charges and expences, by vs alreadie made, and dayly performed for the defence of Chriſtendome, and our owne Realmes and dominions, whereof the chiefe cauſes proceede from the great exceſſiue loſſes and intereſtes that we haue paid and ſuſtained, and which at this preſent wee doe yet ſuſtaine. by reaſon of the leuyings of monyes, exchanges and other contractes and bargaines made (by our factors and dealers) in our names and for our vſes with marchants and men of trafficke, not being able to ſhunne or auoide them, as being by ſo neceſſarie and vrgent occaſions, conſtrained therevnto, whereby all our demaynes, rents, and reuenewes both ordinarie and extraordinarie, are ingaged pawned, and ſpent in ſuch maner, that wee are fallen into ſo great an extremitie, that there reſteth not any thing whereby wee may bee ayded or aſſiſted, as not hauing any other meanes for remedie to be vſed: for that the ſaide Marchantes and men of trafficke which vntill this time were accuſtomed to ſupply our wantes as concerning our royall eſtate, by exchaunging of monies from countrey to countrey, (a thing very requiſite and neceſſarie) do now excuſe and withdraw themſelues making difficulties to traf-

ficke

ſicke or deale with vs, although they holde and keepe in their poſſeſſions all our ſaide treaſures and royal demaines, from whence doth ariſe and proceed ſo many ſtrange and great difficulties, which if they be not ſpeedily preuented, would bee the onely hazarding and daunger of that which the Lorde our God hath ſomuch recommended vnto vs, which is the conſeruation of his Catholike Church, the good eſtate and proſperitie of our louing ſubiectes and vaſſalles, that liue vnder our protection, and the chaſtiſing and ouerthrowing of the enemies, infidels and hereticks of the ſame, which are all duties and bondes not one-lyſo neere and great, as pretious and moſt neceſſarie. The like is the remedying of thoſe great intereſtes, with the inconueniences that proceede from them, as much as in vs lyeth to preuent, and not to ſuffer anymore ſuch vnlawful exactions within our realmes, as now are vſed by all ſortes of men, yea by husbandmen, and ſuch as liue by tilling of the ground, ſo that hauing of and refuſing their vſuall trade and maner of liuing, they haue and doe become Marchants and ſurers: whereby they make and reape great gaines and profite to themſelues, but to the vtter decay and vnderance of the ſeruice of God & vs, & to the great diſcommoditie of our realms and dominions, whereby proceedeth a matter of no ſmall conſequence and conſideration: For that hauing by theſe meanes brought great quantities of gold and ſiluer out of the Indies, they haue ſithence diſtributed and diſperſed the ſame into the Kingdomes and dominions of infidels, and enemies to chriſtendome, & to vs, where-

by they haue recouered meanes of forces and greater ſtrengthes, and wee thereby are conſtrayned to increaſe and augment our forces, and ſo to be at greater charge in reſpect wherof we haue appointed the beſt order and moſt aduiſed meanes that poſſible may be found for the prouiſion and ſatiſfactions of our ſayde bonds and duties, whereon dependeth (as we ſaid before) the defence of Chriſtendome, & of our realmes, eſtates and Signories, with the peace and tranquillitie of the ſubiects and vaſſalles of the ſame.

And hauing a vigilant care and watchfull eye vnto this thing, ſo much important. There is found not any means more conuenient nor of better or vprighter dealing then to repaire and vnburthen our royal treaſures and demaines, of and from the hinderances, and vniuſt exactions which they haue receyued by meanes of the ſayd rigors of exchaunges and intereſts, by vs ſuffred and tollerated in the time of our contrections, thereby to auoide far greater dangers, as might haue beene the fayling to ſupply the neceſſarie prouiſion of our warres, and ſuch other things as depend thereon: Wherevnto we haue made our prouiſion by ſuch extreame meanes, as not being otherwiſe poſſible, by reaſon of the occaſions offered to find other remedies for the ſame: to the end that the ſaide intereſtes may ceaſe, and bee aboliſhed by all meanes and good wayes poſſible, to the end likewiſe that in ſhort time ſuch perſons as haue trauelled and deale with may be paid and contented, for any thing which ſhall be found lawfully & iuſtly due vnto them, by reaſon of the aforeſaid obligations and contractes. We haue

ordayne

ordayned and decreede, and by theſe preſentes doe ordayne and decree to helpe and further our ſelues, with all the ſaide aſſignations, that we haue giuen and paſſed (as well within theſe our realmes as without) vnto all Marchants and traffiquers for any treaſures, or contractes, that hath beene made and paſſed vnto them, within theſe Realmes and alſo without by our commandement in what ſorte ſoeuer they may bee, ſince the decree and generall meanes by vs prouided, and appointed the *1e* of September 1575. and the *Ve* of December 1577. vntill the day of the date of theſe preſentes, and that there ſhall preſently an account be made and finiſhed with them for all ſuch ſummes of money, as are or may be due vnto them, according to the foote and order which herein we will cauſe to be ſet forth and declared, which done they ſhalbe ſatiſfied and paide whatſoeuer wee owe vnto them, or they by good proofe can aske or pretend to be due.

For which cauſes and reaſons aforeſaid, we haue by theſe preſents ſuſpended, and hold in ſuſpence all the ſaid aſſignations by vs giuen and tranſported vnto the ſaide Marchantes and traffiquers, vpon any of our Demaines, aswell within this realme as without, as vpon borrowed releeſes, aides and other partes, and natures of our goods and treaſures proceeding from the ſaid finances, exchanges and contracts, to the end they may no longer inioy or receyue the ſame: but to the contrarie that the moneyes that haue proceeded and hereafter ſhall proceede from the ſame, ſhall be receyued and put into our royall coffers, to be imployed vpon the neceſſarie and expreſſe affaires by vs

to bee accompliſhed and brought to effect. And hereby declare, that from this day forwards, the ſaid contractes, intereſtes and other meanes which in that reſpect we haue deliuered, agreed, and graunted vnto them ſhall ceaſe and be diſcontinued, commanding that to the ſame end letters ſhal preſently be diſpatched, and neceſſarie and aucthentike prouiſions ſent forth vnto the miniſters and diſtributers of our royall treaſures, for the good conduction, ſuretie and recouering of the ſaid aſſignations, hauing allowed and approued, and by theſe preſents allowing and approuing whatſoeuer in this reſpect hath beene reſolued and ordayned by the preſidentes of our royall counſel, and of our treaſures, that all whatſoeuer hath been done by them, was by our ſpeciall will and commandement. Giuen at *Pardoce* the 20. of Nouember, 1596.

Signed

IO EL REY.

And ſomewhat lower.

By the King our ſouereign Lords commandement.

Gonzalla de Veras.

A BRIEFE DIS-

courſe of the faculties and affaires of the King of Spayne.

The wiſe man very well affirmeth and ſaith, that whoſoeuer giueth his mind to delight in vanities, reapeth nought but vanitie, and the ſame Spirit of truth ſpeaking of the riches of this world, termeth them vanities and thinges of no moment.

The greateſt men I ſay, and all their wealth which wee adore, are meerely vanitie, and he that ſhould them weigh againſt thinges of nought, ſhould finde thinges nought much waightier then they.

NEuertheleſſe wee ſee that men, when they ought moſt to obſerue true wiſedome, for the rule and compaſſe of their affections, (I meane hauing attained vnto the age of a perfect man or to old yeares) they do onely and ordinarily, and that with moſt great care and ſtudie, deuiſe how to get riches: If they behold yong men ſeeking after pleaſures and delightes, they blame them for their follies and vanities, and yet

notwithstanding in twentie of their discourses, or dayly actions, eighteene of them are concerning the golden number, and rule of Multiplication, as the superlatiue and soueraigne thing in this worlde, and whereby men accomplish and attaine vnto the end of all things: It is needles to dispute or deny, that riches are not of great power and efficacie among men, seeing (as a certaine Philosopher saith,) that the most part of men are slaues vnto riches: and a Poet writeth, that they giue and dispose a forme and maner of being vnto things: & yet to thinke or suppose that any man in his aboundance hath euer accomplished or brought all his desires vnto effect: It were a certaine iniurie vnto that spirite of truth, which calleth them vanities, and not a sure foundation, of that which wee pretend to edifie. Such as haue aboundance, would yet haue more, and such again as haue great store, doe yet liue in great necessities, (I speake this in respect of Princes and great potentates.) But diuers true and credible histories doe euidently show and declare vnto vs, the great daungers happened vnto many men, as well in the pursute, as in the bestowing and imployments thereof: for that diuers princes who with most couetous and greedy minds, haue without all measure continually sought to exact the treasures and riches of their subiects haue thereby not onely moued and procured great troubles and dissentions within their dominions, but haue beene driuen from them, as in our time it happened to *Christierne* King of *Denmarke*: Others abounding in great riches and blinded therewith, haue enterpri-

sed

ſed thinges ſo difficult and great, that thereby they haue vtterly ouerthrowne themſelues, as chanced to the moſt vnfortunate Prince *Charles* laſt Duke of *Burgonie*: But omitting theſe examples of times paſt, we neede not goe out of the lowe Countries, nor from the preſent time, to find out and ſet before our eyes the like examples, tending to the ſame end. What hath beene the firſt cauſe and original beginning that moued the lowe Countries vnto the alteration and generall diſcontentment againſt the King of *Spayne*, and his counſell, but onely that moſt cruell impoſition of the tenth part of all their goods whatſoeuer? By which meanes in the ende he would haue drawne vnto his coffers the whole riches of that Countrey (imitating therein the Emperour *Caracalle*, who vſed to ſay, that the handling of gold & ſiluer belonged onely vnto him:) as for example, when the ſheepe had paide the tenth parte of her value, after that the skinne, the wooll, the yeame that proceeded thereof, as likewiſe the cloth, both by whole ſale and retaile, ech for his parte was to doe the like. Did hee not build & erect his Citadeles & caſtels in the principal townes and places of thoſe Countries, thereby to aſſure himſelfe thereof, as alſo to impeach and keepe the countrey from oppoſing themſelues againſt the ſame? Which being obtayned and receyued, hee aſſured and perſwaded himſelfe to reape and obtayne thereby as great and yearely a reuenewe, as hee receyued from his *Indies*. In ſuch ſorte, that accordinge as God doeth vſe ſome thinges to bee an inſtrument to bring others to effect: wee ſee and

perc[illegible] th[illegible] hath ſerued (as it were) for a ladder to attaine and come vp vnto the eſtabliſhment of the [illegible] the prouinces of *Holland* and *Zeland*, being [illegible]d vpon things of greater moment, then the [illegible] this world. And the King of Spaine thinking thereby to drawe vnto himſelfe ſo great a treaſure [illegible] the Low Countries, hath therein raiſed and [illegible]red ſo great a warre, that it not onely decreaſeth but [illegible] his coffers, a great part of his *Indian* riches, [illegible]ein you may well behold what hee hath gotten, by thinking to gaine ouermuch. Let vs now [illegible] and [illegible] into his [illegible]edinges, whether that the other [illegible] of his [illegible]reſures, which he imployeth in [illegible] and his imagined conqueſtes be any profitable [illegible] to him. He will conquere *France*, *England*, [illegible] and *Holland*, and all at one time, wherein many [illegible] hence he hath conſumed ſo many millions of Gold, as well by open as ſecreat meanes, what I pray you hath he then profited? To the contrarie, he rather reſembleth the furious and vaine ſenſor, that imploying all his force, dexteritie, and cunning with one blow to kil his enemy, not taking care in the mean time to foreſee his owne daungers, lying open with his bodie doth in the end receyue his deadly wound. Wee ſee by this Edict lately publiſhed in *Spaine*, and the returning of the *Cardinals* billes of exchange, how needy he is of money, and ſo deſtitute of his armes & weapons, wherewith hee vſed to fight againſt other men, it is a common ſaying, that he which gripeth too much can neuer holde faſt: and the Spaniards, *Qui todo le quiere, todo le Pierde.* If the King of *Spaine*, being

ing so destitute of money and treasure, were presently assailed and set vpon by the princes and states his enemies, that are lately allied together, with intent to put him to his plunge, where shold he find the means to make resistance, to thinke or suppose that this Edict is onely the pollicie of a prince to couer that which he desireth of his subiectes, and not the truth of his estate and manner of dealing were meere abuse: for that from time to time in the pursute of his affaires, he hath euidently giuen to vnderstand, that he reserueth nothing to aduance or further his intents or enterprises, so earnest hath he alwaies beene, bending his bow as stiffe as possible he might.

It is a great case, and almost a paradoxe, that hee which by abundance of money would ruinate and ouerthrow other mens actions, by want is oftentimes found to ouerthrow his owne. What other thing then the mutenie of *Mondragons* regiment at *Zierizee* for want of payment, did assure and reestablish the affaires (otherwise bare and naked) of *Holland* and *Zealand*? It woulde be ouer long and tedious to rehearse the particular mutenies happened among his souldiers for want of money, and the hinderances hee hath thereby receiued. Of late a great number of his Spaniards began a mutenie at *S. Poll* in *Arthois*, which continued almost the space of one whole yeare: After that what meant the great assemblie of so many men of warre at the bridge of *Sambie* in *Henault*? At the same time the Spanish garrison being in *Dunkerke*, fell in a muteny, and since that the Italians in *Brabant* did the like at the same instant, when hee thought to

execute some great exploite, which mutenies haue happened vnto him within the space of two whole yeares and a halfe: and nowe for want of money are not all his soldiers readie to raise a muteny? The misery being so great among them that they dayly come in great numbers for want of breade to yeelde themselues vnto his enemies. Hath not the *Cardinall* himselfe not long sithence pawned his iewelles to furnish the necessarie charges of his house. Hath not diuers of the cittizens of certaine of his townes in the lowe Countries beene sought vnto for money to that effect? If these brackes and alterations haue beene effected and brought to passe euen in the middest of his greatest prosperities, and flower of armes, what thinketh he may happen vnto him, if he be once constrained to seeke for his owne defence, as it is hoped he will shortly be? Doth he not feare to lose the rest of his low Countries in stead of conquering others? It is not to be doubted if it be feared, or whether there be any apparance of the same, when as wee may behold as cleerely as in a glasse, the certainety of his proceedinges, together with his vnaccustomed dealings.

Bernardin de Mendoza that great busie headed fellow, and minister of ambition, whome God hath stricken blinde, because he alwaies vaunted, that hee shoulde alwaies see his maisters actions to take effect, was wont to report of his King (as a great thing, and sauouring of an extreame maiestie) that he had never enterprised any action, which he was not fully resolued to bring vnto effect it is wel known: that the king of

of *Spaine* not long ſithence during the league, wrote into Fraunce, as if he had beene their lawfull King, ſigning his letters (that he ſent to *Paris* the chiefe cittie of that Countrey) *IO EL REY.* promiſing them to bee their gracious Prince, with a thouſande ſuch like deuiſes: for that although hee procured and ſought the gouernment of that countrey, a queſtion being moued as concerning a new election of the Princes of *Spaine*, commonly called the infant, neuertheleſſe it was in title onely, at the leaſt as long as hee liued, he minding & intending alwayes to haue both the gouernment, and the conduction.

Now that he changeth his purpoſe & reſolution (as I ſaid before) making ſhow, or els truely to agree with *France*, he muſt of force vſe ſome great cunning the better to direct his affaires, els in good earneſt hee mindeth to conclude a peace. If he deſire a peace, & ſo tameth his great and inflexible courage, it muſt certainely be beleeued that it proceedeth not from a ſmall matter, but of ſome extreame feare: and what? but onely the loſſe of his low countries which (to ſay the truth) hang as it were by a thread, if *Fraunce* wold once vouchſafe to doe what it might to make him loſe them: if he cauſe this ſubtill practiſe to be vſed, in ſeeming to hearken to an agreement, thereby to blind and deceyue the Frenchmen, as the Spaniards vaunt themſelues for certaine yeares paſt to haue led them by the noſe, (the *Signeur de Marle*, Gouernour of *Arras* being one among the reſt that maketh this report) they deceyue themſelues, for the Frenchmen at that time (as it is ſaide) did paſſe ſixe weekes for a

month. Their estate was so intangled, that as then they made shew not to see, or perceyue that which already they felt. But now their ioyntes and members being well knit and set together, whereby they may boldely lift vp their hattes and looke their enemies in the face: thinke not they will indure to bee mocked or that they will aforde the Spaniarde so much pleasure, as to stand and laugh at them. Their King is a sufficient king, he heareth wel how the clocke goeth, hee is a valiaunt Captaine, hee knoweth it is time to charge the enemie, when he beginneth to flie. The King of *Spaine* may well imploy the *Pope* to this ende, but the King of *Fraunce* knoweth that this good holy Father hath hindered him as much as he coulde, from getting his owne countrey againe, and vsed all the meanes hee coulde to put it into the King of Spaines hands: but yet it cannot now hinder him for taking his reuenge, and recouering of himselfe, and seeking of his owne which the King of *Spaine* withholdeth from him in *Nauarre*. It is most true, that the king of *Spaine* is exceeding rich, and aboundeth in siluer and gold, but being at greater expenses then his reuenewes amount vnto, he resembleth the bad husbandman, which ordinarily eateth his corne before it is ripe, so that his *Indian* reuenewes never commeth home, but it is consumed and assigned before it is brought, and ofsen times he oweth much more then it is, as it appeareth by the tenor of this his Edict, wherein he sheweth that by reason of being so destitute of money and his royall demaines being ingaged, he is constrained to reforme the excessiue charges of exchanges interests

interests, since the yeare 1575. vntil this time, which in very truth is as much to say, as he will play the bankerout, because that he wold not pay diuers millions of money that he oweth to marchants. As if for example it were said vnto thē, that in stead of 24. in the hūdreth which they haue vsually had, they must now content themselues with twelue, the rest he will giue them in readie money, and pay them with these millions of profit and interest, (too excessiue as hee termeth it) which by their trafficke with him they haue gayned: which in effect is the very substance, and meaning of the edict, and as one extremitie followeth another, it must bee thought that hee falleth not into these termes of breaking his credite, without some great extremitie, which is as it may well be seene an extreame consuming and lessening of his treasures, together with a great necessitie of many, which will cause his partakers to bee wiser at an other time, and not to thrust their fingers so far into an other mans mouth. They see likewise, that the chance turneth in such sort, that they might well loase whatsoeuer they venture. And let them call to mind the decree by him made in the yeare 1575. that seemeth by them to be forgotten, which happened by this meanes: The *Pope* then being, did very earnestly write vnto the saide King giuing him to vnderstand, that hee hearde that the said King dealing with Marchants for monyes to be paid and taken vp by exchange and at interest, did giue the said Marchants ouer great and excessiue vsuries & interestes, and such as were wholly contrarie both to the diuine and ciuill lawes, thereby giuing an euill &

moſt intollerable example vnto all Chriſtendome, ſending him word that vpon paine of excommunication, he ſhould no more giue any ſuch exceſſe intereſts, but rather making account with the Marchants, and accounting their exceſſe gains, he ſhould giue them leſſe and more reaſonable intereſt, thereupon the King of *Spaine* (whome diuers men ſuſpected to haue plaide that pageant) making conſcience thereat, deſired the *Pope* to diſpence with him therein, to the ende hee might keepe his word with the ſaide Marchants, but the *Pope* continuing in his threatninges of excommunication, the king dealt in ſuch ſort with his Marchants that in ſhort time after you might ſee diuers of them, which before that time had kept at the leaſt 50. or 60. perſons. In their houſes a man of great account and verie wiſe in this our time, and one that had ſome intelligence in Princes affayres, vſed to ſay; that if the king of *Spaine* were but once hindered and bereaued of one yeares reuenewe of his *Indies*, that he woulde reſemble a man that had loſt his right arme, without doubt a poore foundation it is that dependeth onely vpon the mercie of the winds and waues of the ſeas. Further, thoſe that ſet foot in *Portingal*, and lately in *Cales*, it may be will likewiſe find the meanes, and that ſhortly to do the like in the ſame places from whence the ſmell and ſauour of this golde and ſiluer doeth proceede, and as trouble oppreſſeth and awaketh the Spirites, and maketh men looke into the depth of thinges: it is not to be doubted but that if they ſee a faire marke they will not faile to ſhoot thereat, which if it once happen (as it may well bee done without a miracle

miracle) then shall you behold him that would vsurp and rule ouer all the whole worlde, almost molten & chaunged into *Christierne* king of *Denmarke*, and *Charles* Duke of *Burgonie*: and as I saide at the first, that hauing set his minde vpon vanities hee hath reaped nought but vanitie.

I saide euen now that hee doeth ordinarily spende more, then his reuenewes doth amount vnto, which is the ordinarie course that maketh Marchants to play the bankeroutes: and it is to be wondred at, for that taking vpon him so many great and difficult enterprises, the warres are extreame chargeable vnto him, and much more to him then to another Prince: as for example, when he will furnish an armie by sea, he must fetch the greatest part of his furnitures and prouisions out of forraigne countries, which consumeth him a mountaine of treasure: and for his warres on land, as those in the lowe Countries, which is the principall, hee cannot doe it but it will cost him sixe times more then it costeth his enemies, for that before he hath raised a soldier in *Spaine*, and placed him in the fortiers of *Artois*, ready to fight against a French man, it costeth him a hundreth duckets, where a Frenech souldier will cost his King but ten crownes at the most. It is said the king of *Spaine* vnderstandeth well how to deale with treasures, and the king of *Fraunce* is not vnskilfull to make vp his accounts: he is both a Captaine and a treasurer, whereas the other is but a treasurer and captaine by his deputies. Wee haue saide, (as it is true) that the foundation and likewise the grounde of all his enterprises is his

money, so much subiect vnto mischiefes, but hee holdeth as a second person, I meane in the low countries. It is his Spanish souldiers wherewith hee thinketh to assure his Castelles, hauens, and other principall places, theroby to hold the cuntrey in subiection, & play his parte otherwise with them in the fielde: a poore foundation likewise for a Prince to put his trust in a seruant, that whē he listeth refuseth to do him seruice. Surely that man which seeketh to trouble so many mens heades, must of force be oftentimes much troubled in his own, and walke a thornie and hard path. It had beene a great good for you O King of *Spaine*, that you had not been so rich of money and treasure, for then you would not so rashely haue vndertaken those thinges, which God will neuer leaue vnpunished: he is iealous of his name and of his glorie, and wil not haue man to serue his own turne with the cloake of vaine ambition.

FINIS.